

REMARKS

Claims 2, 5, and 7-11 are pending in the application, with Claims 2, 7, 8, and 10 being independent. In this Amendment, Claims 1, 3, 4, and 6 have been cancelled, and Claims 2, 5, and 7-11 have been amended.

In view of the amendments above and the remarks below, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the present application.

In the Office Action, the Abstract of the disclosure was objected to because it was not a single paragraph. Applicant has amended the Abstract, and submits that, as amended, it conforms to U.S. Patent and Trademark Office requirements.

Also in the Office Action, the Examiner objected to an informality in the specification. Applicant has reviewed the specification, and is submitting a Substitute Specification presenting amendments to the specification addressing the informality identified by the Examiner, and additional minor informalities noted by the Applicant. No new matter has been added.

Also in the Office Action, the Examiner required Figure 18 to be designated as --Prior Art--. Applicant is filing concurrently herewith a Letter Transmitting Corrected Formal Drawings, labeling Figure 18 as required. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

Regarding the claims, Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication in the Office Action that Claims 8 and 9 are allowable, and Claims 2 and 7 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In addition, although Claims 10 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, the Examiner indicated they would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome this rejection.

The amendments presented herein to Claims 8 and 9 are merely formal in nature. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claims 8 and 9 remain allowable. Claims 2 and 7 have been rewritten in independent form and thus, Applicant submits that these claims are in condition for allowance. In addition, Claims 10 and 11 have been amended in view of the Examiner's rejection, and to even more clearly recite the invention claimed therein. Applicant submits that, at least as amended, Claims 10 and 11 are in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, Claims 1, 3, and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,806,605 (Hull). In addition, Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,701,058 (Tsubaki), and Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Hull.

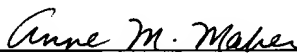
Without conceding the propriety of the rejections, and to advance prosecution, Applicant has cancelled Claims 1, 3, 4, and 6. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the rejection of those claims is now moot. In addition, Claim 5 has been amended to depend from Claim 2. Since the Examiner noted that Claim 2 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, Applicant submits that Claim 5 is allowable for at least the reasons Claim 2 is allowable.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that all of the pending claims, Claims 2, 5, and 7-11, are in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue are respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C., office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address below.

Respectfully submitted,



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